

REMARKS

This application pertains to a novel continuous process for recovery of acid values from a gaseous mixture comprising acid values of acrylic acid and acetic acid.

Claims 1-20 are pending.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 11 and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, because the Examiner finds the terms "aqueous quench liquid" and "immiscible solvent comprising propyl acetate and a cyclohexane" to be indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner views the "chemical characterization" of said liquid or solvent to be unclear, and expresses concern that such solvent and liquid need to be more clearly identified to outline the limitations of the process.

The meaning of both of these terms and the limitations of the claims will be clearly understood by those skilled in the art, however, for the following reasons:

Aqueous quench liquid

Those skilled in the art clearly know that "aqueous" means water-based, and that an "aqueous liquid" is a liquid which is water-based, as opposed to oil based.

Those skilled in the art also know that the word "quench" means "quick cooling".

Thus, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that an aqueous quench liquid is water or a water-based liquid which, in the present case, is used to quickly cool the hot gaseous mixture.

At page 15, lines 13-16, Applicants provide an example of an aqueous quench liquid as aqueous acrylic acid. Those skilled in the art, knowing what an aqueous quench liquid is, and knowing that applicant has given aqueous acrylic acid as an example of same, will clearly understand the meaning of this term and the limits of the claims. Of course, those skilled in the art may want to modify the exact composition of the aqueous quench liquid when practicing the invention, according to their own particular needs.

However, the common knowledge of those skilled in the art in combination with the text of Applicants' description will clearly enable those skilled in the art to understand the subject matter that Applicants regard as their invention, as well as the metes and bounds of the claims.

Were Applicants required to limit their claims to a specific composition for their aqueous quench liquid, a superficial limit would be place on the scope of their protection.

Those skilled in the art know what an aqueous quench liquid is and what it is not.

Immiscible solvent comprising propyl acetate and a cyclohexane

There can be no question, of course, about what "...comprising propyl acetate and a cyclohexane" means.

In the context of Applicants' claims, there can also be no question about what the term "immiscible" means. Thus, the aqueous solution is contacted with an immiscible solvent. The immiscible solvent is clearly one which is immiscible with the aqueous solution. Those skilled in the art will have absolutely no problem in understanding what this means, especially in view of the examples given at page 15, line 29 et seq.

It is clear from the context of the claims and from the description that the solvent is a solvent for acrylic acid and acetic acid. Based on their own knowledge of general chemistry, those skilled in the art will understand what acetic acid and acrylic acid are soluble in, and which of such solvents are immiscible with an aqueous solution of such acids.

Accordingly, neither "aqueous quench liquid" nor "immiscible solvent comprising propyl acetate and a cyclohexane" can be seen as indefinite within the meaning of 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2, 3, 11 and 15 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, should now be withdrawn.

Applicants note with appreciation that there are no art rejections, and that Claims 4-10, 12-14 and 16-20 are objected to only as dependent upon rejected base claims.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Finally, it appears that an IDS for the references cited in the specification has not been submitted heretofore. Applicants are accordingly submitting such an IDS at or about the same time as this response is being submitted. Consideration of said IDS is respectfully requested.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If any extension of time for this response is required, applicant requests that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge the required Petition fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess to our Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted

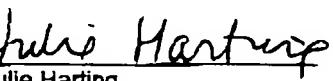
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile, no. 703-308-4556 to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on November 6, 2003.

By 
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Date November 6, 2003